



Technical Bulletin for N.C. General NPDES Permit NCG020000 (Mining Activities) Division of Energy, Mineral, and Land Resources

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Last Revised 10/8/2015

What activities are covered by this general permit?

NCG020000 coverage authorizes:

- Stormwater discharges associated with mining and quarrying of non-metallic minerals (except fuels), mine excavation, processing, and vehicle maintenance activities (VMA) at mine sites.
- Wastewater discharges (dewatering, process wastewater, wastewater recycle system overflows).
- Operation of wastewater treatment systems (Authorization to Construct no longer required).

NCG020000 coverage is NOT APPLICABLE to:

- Borrow Pits covered by the NC DOT statewide stormwater permit.
- Peat mining, coal mining, metal mining, or oil & gas extraction operations.
- Wastewater not specifically identified by the general permit.

What are key stormwater requirements?

NCG020000 requires periodic discharge monitoring and a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SPPP):

- Develop and implement an SPPP, and update it at least annually.
- Inspect Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) once every seven (7) calendar days.
- Semi-annual analytical monitoring and qualitative (visual) monitoring.
- Report stormwater monitoring data once a year by March 1st to DEQ Central Office.
- Report benchmark exceedances or Tier 2 monitoring to the DEMLR Regional Office within 30 days.
- Respond to benchmark exceedances according to Tier response requirements.

What are key wastewater requirements?

NCG020000 stipulates wastewater treatment facility operational requirements and periodic discharge monitoring:

- Notify DEQ if facility fails to perform satisfactorily or creates nuisance conditions.
- Only DEQ-evaluated flocculants may be used, if administered according to maximum application doses.
- Quarterly analytical monitoring for first year, or until four consecutive samples comply with all limits (then semi-annual monitoring allowed). Quarterly monitoring schedule resumes upon any limit violation.
- Settleable solids (SS) monitoring applies to discharges to HQW, ORW, SA, SB, PNA, or Tr designated waters.
- Total Suspended Solids (TSS) limits specific to industrial sand mines, and to any mine discharging to HQW.
- Report wastewater effluent monitoring data once a year (by March 1st) to DEQ Central Office.
- Report effluent limitation violations to the DEMLR Regional Office within 30 days.
- Effluent turbidity levels above the water quality standard prompt upstream and downstream monitoring.

What has changed from the previous permit?

Some changes specific to Stormwater:

- Reduced BMP inspections (weekly) for active mines; additional allowances for inactive mines that qualify for "dormant status."
- Changes to SPPP Annual Update.
- "Measurable storm event" (any size that results in a discharge) replaces "Representative" event.
- New benchmarks and Tiers specific to turbidity.
- Total Flow and event duration no longer required.
- pH removed from VMA monitoring.

Some changes specific to Wastewater:

- May drop to semi-annual WW monitoring after four quarterly samples that comply with all limitations.
- Turbidity instream monitoring is required if effluent levels above the water quality standard.
- SS monitoring for sensitive waters only (HQW, etc.)
- TSS limits apply to industrial sand mines and HQWs.

Changes from the last permit are detailed in the "Response to Comments and Summary of Changes" Document for the 2015 NCG02 GP on our website.

Frequently Asked Questions

What if my mine is inactive?

The permit makes allowances for **inactive** mines that have suspended all industrial activities and that certify to DEMLR that the site has been stabilized. If approved for "dormant status," these operations qualify for reduced BMP inspections and may be exempted from outfall monitoring by the Regional Engineer.

Do I have to monitor all outfalls?

Yes. However, you may request Representative Outfall Status (ROS). If approved, ROS allows monitoring at fewer outfalls. To request ROS, submit an ROS Request Form to the DEMLR Regional Office. The form is available on our website (below).

Also, the Regional Office may exempt mines with "dormant status" from analytical and/or qualitative monitoring.

What if I sell my business, or the name changes?

You are required to notify DEMLR of those changes in writing, and continuation of permit coverage is subject to the Director's approval. Please submit the Name/Ownership Change form located on our Program website.

What is wastewater, and what is stormwater at a mine site?

Any water contacting an actively mined area, water used to process mined materials, and mine dewatering water are all considered "wastewater." For some mines, "mine dewatering" also means wet pit overflows, and not just pumped-out water. Any stormwater that commingles with these waters is "wastewater." "Stormwater" includes runoff from areas related to mining, processing, or raw material storage areas, such as haul roads or processing plant areas at the mine.

Sometimes the answer is not clear because of how broad the definitions are. For example, N.C. considers runoff from areas that contain overburden only (no mined or processed material), and that does not commingle with wastewater (including runoff from the mine), to be stormwater. If you are unsure about discharges, please contact the DEMLR Regional Office for assistance.

Does a certified lab need to analyze my samples?

Monitoring under NPDES permits must be conducted in accordance with test procedures approved in federal regulations in 40 CFR §136. All labs certified by

North Carolina perform analysis in accordance with those procedures. While N.C. certification requirements do not apply to testing stormwater-only discharges, data gathered under an NPDES permit must still conform to federal requirements. Using a North Carolina certified lab is one way to ensure compliance. A list of certified labs is available from: <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/wq/lab/cert/>

What if I pull samples for my analytical monitoring, and I'm unable to get a sample or valid results for a parameter?

If this happens, please sample for the missing parameter during the next measureable storm event or wastewater discharge.

If I sample my discharge, do I have to do visual monitoring at the same time?

You may, but it is not necessary under NCG02. Some other general permits require it, however.

What if there is no flow for a period between two samples that exceed a benchmark? Are those consecutive exceedances?

Yes. This scenario still puts you in Tier 2. The new permit is more clear about how the Tier 2 trigger omits periods of no discharge.

What do I do when my permit expires?

Permittees are not required to submit an application for renewal unless directed by the Division. The permittee should continue to abide by this general permit if it expires and renewed coverage has not yet been issued.

Who can help me with questions?

Your questions about stormwater permit requirements can be addressed to the DEMLR Offices:

Asheville Office.....	(828) 296-4500	Washington Office.....	(252) 946-6481
Fayetteville Office.....	(910) 433-3300	Wilmington Office.....	(910) 796-7215
Mooresville Office.....	(704) 663-1699	Winston-Salem Office...	(336) 776-9800
Raleigh Office.....	(919) 791-4200	Central Office.....	(919) 707-9220



Helpful Link:

DEMLR Stormwater Permitting Program:
<http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/lr/stormwater>